



# State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

## \*\*\*\*NEWS RELEASE\*\*\*\*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### ACT composite score is a consistent 22.2 for sixth year

*Participation continues to increase*

MADISON—Wisconsin's composite score on the ACT college admissions test held at 22.2 for the sixth straight year with 69 percent of 2005 graduates taking the test. The state missed first place among the 25 states where the ACT is the predominant college admissions test by one-tenth of a point.

2005 ACT	
Composite Scores	
State	22.2
Nation	20.9

"Our 2005 graduates showed consistent performance on this curriculum-based achievement test with overall results that give us reason to celebrate," said State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster. "We are testing more students, and more of our test-takers are students of color, participation that has steadily increased over the years. Statewide, our graduates far outperform students nationally."

Minority-group students represented 10.2 percent of Wisconsin's 45,700 ACT-takers. Last year, students of color were 9.8 percent of all state students taking the ACT. Generally, composite scores by racial ethnic group were higher than the nation, with the exception of African-American and Asian students. Those students also were less likely than their national counterparts to take the recommended college preparatory curriculum, also called the "ACT core curriculum," which consists of four years of English and three or more years each of mathematics, science, and social studies.

"As a state, we must sustain our efforts to improve participation and performance by students of color in rigorous coursework and the college preparations that are a gateway to postsecondary studies," Burmaster said. "Our work to close the achievement gap is strengthened by recent budgetary efforts that support education statewide, and specifically maintain 4-year-old kindergarten and class-size reduction

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funding in early grades as well as improvements in gifted and talented education at the middle-school level and Advanced Placement programming in high schools.”

Nearly 60 percent of all Wisconsin students took a core curriculum compared to about 56 percent nationally. Wisconsin students who pursued rigorous pre-college coursework averaged 2 points higher than those who took less than a core

curriculum. The percentage of Wisconsin students reporting they took a core curriculum was African-American, 48 percent; American Indian, 50 percent; Asian, 55 percent; Mexican American, 54 percent;

Puerto Rican/Hispanic, 53 percent; and white, 61 percent.

**2005 ACT Scores by School Program**

	Wisconsin			Nation		
	Core Program	Less than Core	Total Group	Core Program	Less than Core	Total Group
English	22.3	20.1	21.5	21.6	18.8	20.4
Math	22.8	20.7	22.0	21.7	19.1	20.7
Reading	23.1	21.1	22.4	22.2	19.8	21.3
Science	22.9	21.2	22.3	21.7	19.6	20.9
Composite	22.9	20.9	22.2	21.9	19.5	20.9

Wisconsin students far out-distanced their national peers in the ACT analysis of college readiness. ACT, in collaboration with postsecondary institutions, has established benchmark scores on ACT subject area tests that indicate readiness for college-level coursework. Students who score at or above the benchmark have a 50 percent chance of earning a B-grade or about a 75 percent chance of earning a C-grade on college-level coursework.

Seventy-six percent of Wisconsin students earned a benchmark score of 18 on the English test compared to 68 percent nationally. In mathematics, 52 percent of state students scored a 22 or better compared with 41 percent nationally, meaning these students are ready to take college algebra. Sixty percent of Wisconsin students earned a benchmark

score of 21 in reading, a new benchmark this year, compared with 51 percent nationally. For science, 36 percent of state students earned a benchmark score of 24 compared to 26 percent nationally, showing likely success in college biology.

On subject area tests, Wisconsin scores fluctuated with English at 21.5, the same as the previous year, and science up one-tenth of a point from 2004 to 22.3. The reading score was 22.4, down one-tenth of

**Percentage of Students meeting ACT College-Readiness Benchmarks**

ACT Benchmark*	Wisconsin	Nation
<b>English (18)</b>	76	68
<b>Math (22)</b>	52	41
<b>Reading (21)</b>	60	51
<b>Science (24)</b>	36	26

\*A benchmark score is the minimum score needed on an ACT subject area test to indicate a 75 percent chance of obtaining a C or higher grade in a corresponding college-level course.

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point from the previous year to the same level it was in 2003. The score on the mathematics test also dropped one-tenth of a point to 22.0.

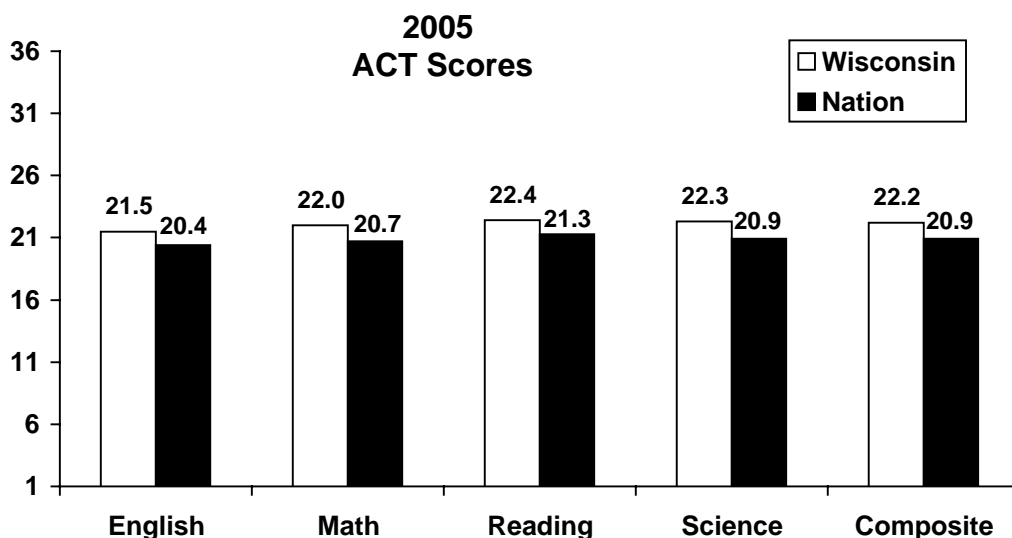
“Both in Wisconsin and the nation, we must encourage students to take more mathematics and science courses in high school,” Burmaster said. “Research has shown that mathematics, especially, is a bridge to success in postsecondary studies even for students whose interests fall outside the realm of math and science. This will be work our High School Task Force, which I announced earlier this year, considers as it examines high school mathematics and science education as well as other efforts to improve high school learning for all students.”

The ACT is scored on a scale of 1 to 36. Nationwide 1.2 million public and private school students took the test at some time during their high school career. The national composite score for 2005 graduates was 20.9, the same as for 2004. In Wisconsin, about 55 percent of students who took the ACT also took the optional writing test, first offered in February. Nationally, about 36 percent of students took the writing test. Writing scores were reported to students and to colleges and universities specified by students for admissions purposes. Writing scores will be part of ACT’s national report next year.

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**NOTE:** For local scores, please contact district or school officials or download data from the Department of Public Instruction’s Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools website. Scores are available on the Data Analysis Download Options section at <<http://data.dpi.state.wi.us/data/DataDownload/fm.SelectDataSet.asp>>.

**ATTACHMENT:** Additional information about state and national ACT scores follows.



**2005 ACT Composite Scores by  
Racial/Ethnic Group and School Program\***

<b>Wisconsin</b>	<b>Takers</b>	<b>Composite Score</b>	<b>Percentage Taking Core</b>	<b>Composite Scores</b>	
				<b>Core or More</b>	<b>Less than Core</b>
African American	1,876	16.9	48.24	17.4	16.4
American Indian	318	20.4	50.31	21.7	18.9
Asian	1,409	20.1	55.29	20.9	18.8
Mexican American	641	19.6	53.98	20.5	18.5
Puerto Rican, Hispanic	420	19.5	52.62	20.1	18.5
White	37,867	22.6	61.06	23.2	21.4
All Students	45,700	22.2	59.43	22.9	20.9

<b>Nation</b>	<b>Takers</b>	<b>Composite Score</b>	<b>Percentage Taking Core</b>	<b>Composite Scores</b>	
				<b>Core or More</b>	<b>Less than Core</b>
African American	138,964	17.0	54.15	17.7	16.1
American Indian	13,695	18.7	47.29	20.1	17.4
Asian	39,284	22.1	61.38	22.7	20.8
Mexican American	52,586	18.4	53.27	19.2	17.3
Puerto Rican, Hispanic	30,861	18.9	51.28	19.9	17.5
White	781,581	21.9	57.72	22.8	20.4
All Students	1,186,251	20.9	55.51	21.9	19.5

\*Total test-takers by racial/ethnic group does not equal the total number of test-takers for the ACT because not all students identified their racial or ethnic group or their intended high school curriculum.

**Wisconsin ACT Participation by Racial/Ethnic Group**

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2000</b>
African American	1,876	1,652	1,539	1,381	1,336	1,257
American Indian	318	304	292	241	200	248
Asian	1,409	1,483	1,396	1,313	1,208	1,144
Mexican American	641	678	674	582	581	575
Puerto Rican, Hispanic	420	357	308	282	285	246
White	37,867	38,095	38,782	37,121	37,462	37,157
<b>All Students</b>	<b>45,700</b>	<b>45,480</b>	<b>45,669</b>	<b>43,458</b>	<b>43,691</b>	<b>43,494</b>

**Wisconsin ACT Participation and Scores**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Takers</b>	<b>Percent of Graduates Taking ACT</b>	<b>ACT Subscores</b>				<b>Composite</b>
			<b>English</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Science</b>	
2005	45,700	69	21.5	22.0	22.4	22.3	22.2
2004	45,480	68	21.5	22.1	22.5	22.2	22.2
2003	45,669	69	21.3	22.1	22.4	22.3	22.2
2002	43,458	68	21.3	22.2	22.4	22.3	22.2
2001	43,691	68	21.5	22.2	22.4	22.4	22.2
2000	43,494	69	21.4	22.2	22.4	22.4	22.2

\*Percentages for graduating seniors is from *Knocking at the College Door - December 2003, Projections of High School Graduates by State, Income, and Race/Ethnicity, 1998-2018*, by Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.